

JOHN GOODRICH CLARK

1867-1927

By CHARLES C. NORRIS, M.D., F.A.C.S., PHILADELPHIA

JOHN GOODRICH CLARK was born in Wayne County, Indiana, June 4, 1867, the son of Nannie and Thomas E. Clark.

He came from Quaker stock and was educated in public schools until 14 years of age and then entered the preparatory department of Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, where he remained 2 years. He matriculated in the Ohio Western University and became a member of the Beta Theta Pi Fraternity. At the completion of his sophomore year, he joined a U. S. civil engineering party detailed for the survey of the Nez Perce Indian Reservation in Northern Idaho. He later joined a party occupied in the survey of the Utah and Northern Railroad, holding the position of topographer and subsequently that of levelman. At the completion of this survey, he entered the school of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and was graduated in the honor list in 1891.

Dr. Clark served as resident in the St. Agnes and Children's Hospitals of Philadelphia and in the surgical wards of the Bellevue Hospital, New York, and then entered the gynecological department of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, under the directorship of Dr. Howard A. Kelly. He served first as anæsthetist, next as assistant resident physician, and completed his service as resident gynecologist in the Johns Hopkins Hospital, after which he received the appointment of associate in gynecology in the Johns Hopkins University.

In 1898, Dr. Clark entered the anatomical laboratory of the University of Leipzig as a special student and began research work under Professors His and Spalteholz on the life history of the corpus luteum and at the completion of this investigation, he went to Prague and published two additional papers upon research from Prof. Chiari's pathological laboratory. Upon his return to the United States in 1900, he was elected professor of gynecology in the University of Pennsylvania and gynecologist in chief to the University Hospital. He subsequently became consultant gynecologist to the Woman's College, Bryn Mawr, Germantown, Chestnut Hill, and other hospitals.

As a surgeon, Dr. Clark had few equals, his delicacy of touch, knowledge of anatomy, and dexterity, were unsurpassed. His diagnostic ability was almost uncanny and this, backed by his large experience and personal charm, account

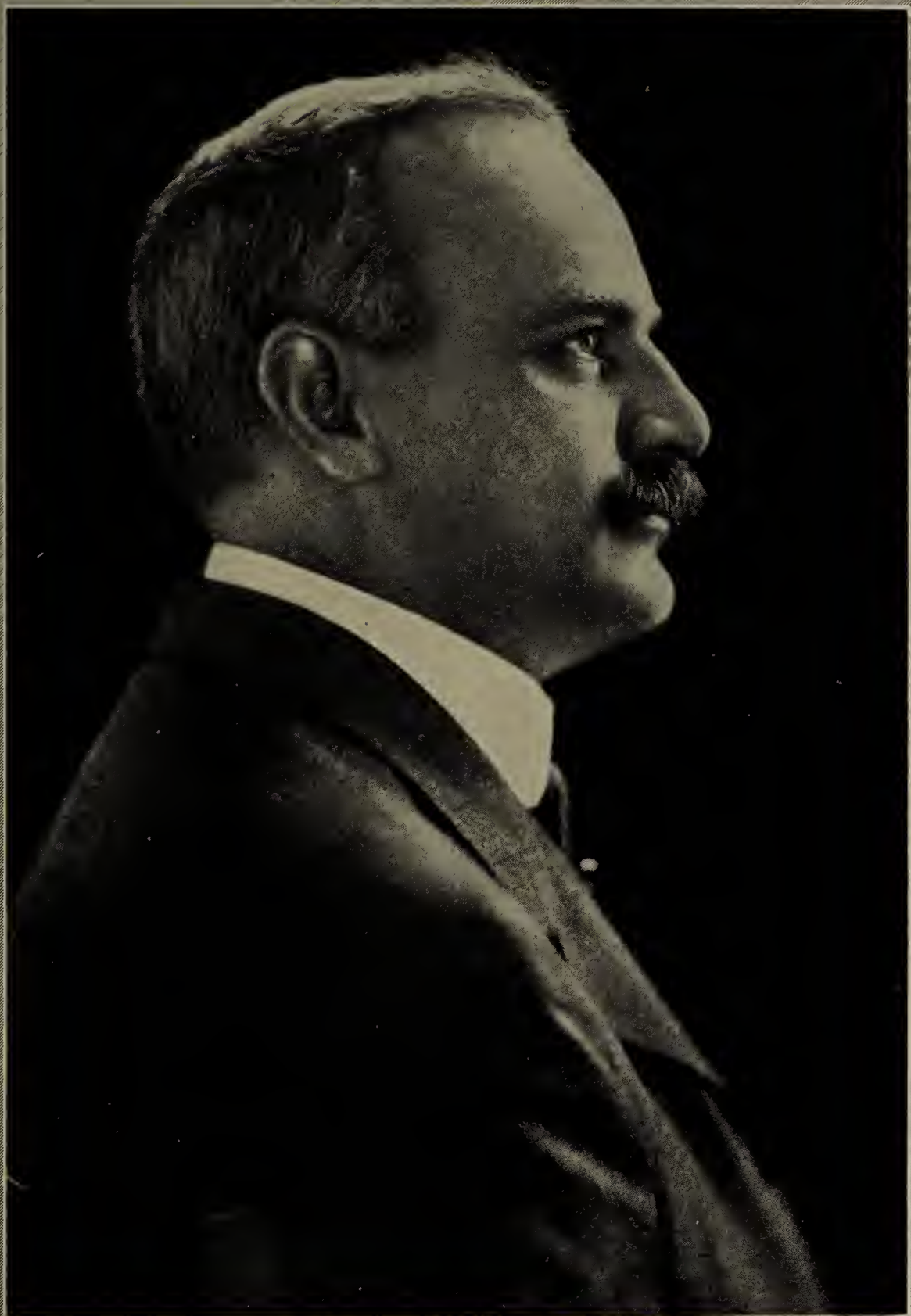
largely for his great success in practice. An outstanding feature in his work was his personal interest in his patients. The real welfare of each person coming under his care invariably took precedence of everything else. No patient, however poor, but upon whom he would willingly expend as much time and effort as upon the most important. This attitude doubtless accounted for the universal respect and love borne him by his patients.

Dr. Clark was not only a great surgeon but also a scientist in the best sense of this much abused term, and nothing interested him more than sound research work. He was a man of fertile imagination and could always suggest practical methods of attacking a difficult problem. His reasoning was sound and his deductions singularly free from error. He contributed largely to the literature of his specialty and was one of the first to advocate a radical operation for cancer of the cervix. In developing this operation, he was influenced by the improved results which had been secured by the Halsted operation for cancer of the breast. Despite the many calls upon his time incident to his teaching and large private practice, he averaged two major papers a year for the last two decades. Although frequently urged to do so, he steadfastly refused to write a textbook, not so much because of the drudgery entailed as that the work necessarily was largely a repetition of what had previously been written and also due to the fact that he felt that there were already so many excellent books available. In 1909, he edited the American edition of Winter and Ruge's *Gynecological Diagnosis* and later consented to collaborate with the writer in the monograph on *Radium in Gynecology*. He was one of the pioneers in the employment of radium for gynecological lesions and was an accepted authority upon this subject.

Dr. Clark was a teacher of unsurpassed ability and possessed the happy faculty of imparting knowledge easily and in an unforgettable manner. His mind was a storehouse not only of scientific facts but of epigrams and anecdotes which were always appropriate and enabled him to emphasize the points which he wished to stress. As a result, his teaching was always interesting and never dragged. He was not a believer in the ordinary didactic lecture. He was one of the first, if not the first, to utilize plastine or artist's clay for demonstrating operative technique and as a modeler and blackboard artist he had few equals.

During the World War, Dr. Clark was a member of the National Defense Council to which he gave unreservedly his time and energy. He was a member of numerous medical societies and a past president of the American Gynecological Society, American Gynecological Club, and American College of Surgeons, of which organization he was one of the founders and a member of the Board of Regents since 1924. For years he served upon the editorial staff of its official journal.

To his assistants, Dr. Clark was the ideal Chief, generous, kindly, helpful, and stimulating. His advice was invariably excellent and was always at the disposal



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of his associates. He was a believer in the value of travel and had visited practically all the important gynecological and surgical clinics of the world. In 1921, he visited China as a member of the distinguished Rockefeller Commission for the opening and the dedicating of the Union Medical College of Peking.

He was endowed with an extremely retentive memory and rarely forgot a face, a name, or a fact. He was a student of American history and had intended writing a book dealing with certain phases of pioneer days. Beyond reading and history, his chief recreation was golf, of which he was extremely fond. By his death the world has lost a surgeon, teacher, and scientist of unsurpassed ability, and those who were privileged to have been his intimates have lost an unreplaceable friend.

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